United Nations S/PV.6481

Security Council

Sixty-sixth year

Provisional

6481st meeting

Tuesday, 15 February 2011, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Viotti	(Brazil)
Members:	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Ms. Čolaković
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Bonne
	Gabon	Mr. Moungara Moussotsi
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	India	Mr. Manjeev Singh Puri
	Lebanon	Mr. Salam
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	South Africa	Mr. Mashabane
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Mrs. DiCarlo

Agenda

Briefing by the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

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11-23402 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Briefing by the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

The President: Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure I invite Mr. Audronius Ažubalis, Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ažubalis.

Mr. Ažubalis: It is a great pleasure for me to address the Security Council as Chairperson—in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). With 56 participating States spanning the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regions, the OSCE is the world's largest regional organization under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. We highly value the close cooperation that we enjoy with the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The OSCE Summit, held in Astana last year, set the strategic direction of the organization. In Astana, OSCE Heads of State and Government recommitted themselves to the vision of a free, democratic, common and indivisible Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community, rooted in agreed principles, shared commitments and common goals. This message was echoed by the United Nations Secretary-General who spoke eloquently at the Summit of the core principles and common values on which both organizations are based, and called for closer cooperation in order to expand peace, advance human rights, generate sustainable development and build a safer world. Lithuania's chairmanship of the OSCE will try to work towards the realization of these goals.

Allow me now to present our chairmanship's priorities. These include tangible progress in addressing protracted conflicts; improved implementation of media freedom commitments; strengthened OSCE response to transnational threats, including those emanating from outside the OSCE area; enhancing the OSCE's role in the area of energy security; and finally, promoting tolerance education throughout the OSCE area.

Let me address some of this year's central issues. With respect to protracted conflicts, as Chairperson-in-Office I place high priority on seeking progress in the resolution of these conflicts, fully respecting the norms and principles of international law enshrined in the United Nations Charter, as well as the Helsinki Final Act. We will continue to pursue active OSCE participation in the political process aimed at settling the Transdniestrian conflict on the basis of full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova. During my recent visit to Chisinau and Tiraspol, I met with the political leadership on both sides of the Dniestr River to discuss the settlement process. I remain cautiously optimistic — especially after recent consultations with my counterparts in Moscow, Kyiv, Berlin and Brussels — that this year we will be able to resume official negotiations in the five plus two format.

The OSCE role in pursuing a settlement of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict through stronger engagement by the co-Chairs of the Minsk Group will be maintained. We invite the conflict parties and other OSCE participating States to consider options for confidence-building measures and to strengthen OSCE monitoring activities, particularly in the light of growing tensions on the ground.

The chairmanship remains committed to the OSCE's active engagement in the framework of the Geneva international discussions to reduce tensions and build trust among affected communities. Geneva is a unique forum in the sense that three major international actors — the European Union, the OSCE and the United Nations — plus the United States and Russia, are working closely together for security and stability in the region. The full-fledged participation of a representative of the United Nations is extremely important to the success of this process. Therefore, there is a vital need to find here in New York a long-term arrangement ensuring continuous United Nations representation at the Geneva talks. We will urge all participants to take full advantage of the Geneva framework to develop measures to improve security and alleviate humanitarian needs. We will work with the participating States to explore possibilities for extending the OSCE's activities on the

ground, including through a meaningful OSCE presence.

As Chairperson, I place media freedom in general and the safety of journalists in particular very high on the Chair's list of priorities for 2011. As a former journalist, I understand the importance of being able to work in an environment free of intimidation. Working with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, in Vilnius in June we will organize a conference on the safety of journalists. I look forward to active United Nations participation in that event.

In my opinion, it was disappointing that OSCE standards, including media and election standards, were not met during December's presidential elections in Belarus. The chairmanship also regrets the decision of the Government of Belarus to terminate the work of the OSCE Office in Minsk. The Office has provided valuable assistance to Belarus, its people and Government in strengthening institutions, consolidating the rule of law and fostering relations between the Government and civil society, in accordance with OSCE principles and commitments. In our view, this work is not complete. We remain engaged in consultations with the Belarusian authorities to explore ways in which the OSCE can continue to support the Government and people of Belarus.

During the Lithuanian chairmanship, programmes to develop tolerance education and to combat hate crimes and all forms of discrimination will be encouraged and further promoted.

Crises and conflicts in the OSCE region over the past several years have demonstrated the urgent need to strengthen our organization's capabilities to act effectively across the entire conflict cycle. The OSCE does this in a variety of ways, including through its field presences, the work of its Vienna-based secretariat, and its three specialized institutions. We must provide early warning when there are signs of smoke. Despite progress in recent years, some areas of the OSCE — such as parts of the Caucasus, South-East Europe and Central Asia — remain vulnerable.

Early warning must be followed by early action. That is why we have been quick to respond to recent events in Albania. In close coordination with the European Union and other concerned parties, we have engaged in a continuous dialogue with Government and opposition leaders. We will continue, via the OSCE field presence and in cooperation with our international partners, to monitor the situation and provide assistance where we can. I trust that our efforts will help to reduce tensions there.

Last year, the OSCE community was faced with a crisis in the Fergana Valley. The situation has calmed down to some extent, but tensions remain. The OSCE Community Security Initiative, developed jointly with Kyrgyzstan, is the key international response to the violence in that fragile State. As we speak, OSCE personnel are deploying to southern Kyrgyzstan. The Initiative will help the Kyrgyzstan authorities to address the specific security situation that evolved in the country after the June events. In implementing the Community Security Initiative, we stand ready to cooperate with the United Nations to achieve the maximum synergy from our efforts.

Let me now turn to OSCE cooperation with the United Nations. A long-standing example of successful OSCE-United Nations cooperation in the field is Kosovo. There, the OSCE Mission (OMIK) continues to implement its mandate under Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) as an integral pillar of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. It is the Lithuanian chairmanship's intention to ensure that OMIK continues to play its agreed role, working to ensure the security and well-being of all communities in Kosovo. The chairmanship shares United Nations concerns about reports of human organ trafficking in Kosovo during the 1990s, and supports the call for an independent investigation and clarification of the facts.

Following the adoption by the General Assembly in September of the Serbian- and European Union-sponsored resolution 64/298 on Kosovo, the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue offers a concrete opportunity to move forward on issues of mutual concern and to improve the lives of ordinary people. The OSCE stands ready to contribute to this process in areas where it has the relevant expertise. In Astana, the OSCE's participating States agreed that in facing emerging threats, such as terrorism, organized crime and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, greater unity of purpose and action must be achieved.

Recognizing the leading role of the United Nations in the fight against terrorism, the Lithuanian chairmanship is firmly committed to fruitful cooperation with United Nations bodies in promoting

the universal legal framework against terrorism. At the Astana Summit, the Secretary-General called upon the OSCE to join the fight against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Working with the participating States, the chairmanship will facilitate the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004).

We also intend to step up our response to organized crime. As a regional arrangement of the United Nations, we can do more to help States implement the Palermo Convention and its three Protocols. We will also look at how to strengthen the capacity of participating States to respond to emerging challenges, such as cybersecurity. To this end, we intend to hold an OSCE conference on this topic during our chairmanship. Active United Nations participation in that event would be most valuable and highly appreciated.

Based on its own experience in the Baltic region, Lithuania believes strongly in the value of regional and subregional cooperation. We see cooperation at that level as a tool to promote genuine security and stability, to resolve conflicts and to achieve sustainable economic development. In our interconnected world, we must place special focus on cooperation between the OSCE and adjacent regions.

In that spirit, the Lithuanian chairmanship will intensify its work in support of United Nations-led international efforts to stabilize Afghanistan, which is an OSCE partner for cooperation. Our primary goal will be to counter the transnational threats stemming from its territory. We will work through concrete projects, in close cooperation and coordination with the Afghan authorities, our own Central Asian participating States, the United Nations and other international actors and organizations active in the region.

The OSCE experience could also be an example to other regions of the world, including among our Asian and Mediterranean partners for cooperation. We stand ready to share our experience and expertise where they are needed, for example in the Middle East and the Korean peninsula. Twenty years ago, the OSCE played a key role in managing the challenges of transition in Eastern Europe. In these times of dramatic change in Tunisia and Egypt, perhaps the OSCE toolbox, principles and institutions could provide inspiration to others.

We will continue to share the wealth of OSCE experience in cross-dimensional security with other regional organizations, such as the African Union, the League of Arab States, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum and the Organization of American States.

I thank members of the Security Council for their attention.

We look forward to ongoing practical cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations. The more effective that the OSCE can be in promoting security and cooperation in Europe, the more time the Council will have to devote to other challenges in the other areas of the world.

The President: I thank His Excellency Minister Ažubalis for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mrs. DiCarlo (United States of America): I would like to welcome Foreign Minister Ažubalis to the Security Council and to thank him very much for his comprehensive briefing today.

As a member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the United States is committed to working with other participating States and the OSCE secretariat to advance the organization's work in its three areas of competence, namely, the political-military, economic-environmental and human dimensions. The OSCE's comprehensive approach to security and practical focus across all three dimensions make it a valuable partner to the United Nations in addressing global security challenges, both within and outside the OSCE region. I would like to highlight four areas of beneficial OSCE cooperation with the United Nations.

First, in January's debate (see S/PV.6472) on post-conflict institution-building and in last week's debate (see S/PV.6479) on security and development, the Council noted that the sustainability of a peace process often hinges on strengthening key national institutions in the immediate aftermath of conflict. This is particularly vital in the areas of the rule of law and security sectors. The OSCE has been an indispensable partner of the United Nations in this regard.

In the Balkans, as one of the pillars of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, the OSCE has played an important role in helping to build and advise Kosovo's institutions from the ground up. We commend the OSCE's work with the Government of Kosovo to increase governmental transparency and good governance, in particularly at the local level.

I would also like to note the contributions of the OSCE to the international community's efforts to help stabilize Afghanistan, in particular in helping the Afghan people to strengthen border security, fight drug trafficking and promote development.

Women must have an equitable stake in post-conflict peacebuilding and decision-making in their communities. The United States supports further OSCE efforts to increase gender mainstreaming and the issue of gender-based violence in the security sector, as well as to encourage more participating States to implement national action plans.

As the United Nations looks for ways to make its civilian response more effective in post-conflict situations, we should consider whether there are ways to better leverage the existing capacity-building expertise of organizations such as the OSCE.

Secondly, the United States commends the conflict prevention and conflict resolution role played by the Chairperson-in-Office and the organization as a whole. We appreciate the OSCE's co-chairmanship with the United Nations and the European Union of the Geneva discussions that bring together Georgia, Russia and participants from the de facto authorities in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The OSCE's facilitation of the Joint Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism for South Ossetia is important for addressing ongoing security and humanitarian concerns on the ground. We urge participants to meet regularly to address practical issues and enhance confidence-building measures. The United States supports the re-establishment of an OSCE presence throughout Georgia and the continued travel to Georgia by its Special Representative on Protracted Conflicts. We also note the OSCE's quick response in the wake of last year's violence in Kyrgyzstan and the recent efforts by the OSCE's community security initiative to support the Kyrgyzstan police in reducing tensions and providing security for all communities in Kyrgyzstan. Such efforts have helped prevent further violence and contribute to long-term stability.

Thirdly, we cannot separate the human dimension from peace and security. True security in the OSCE area can only be achieved with participating States' full implementation of OSCE commitments to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms. Towards that goal, we particularly welcome the emphasis placed by the Chairperson-in-Office on advancing freedom of the media and of expression, especially where new media and digital technologies are concerned.

Finally, we welcome the emphasis by the Chairperson-in-Office on strengthening efforts to counter transnational threats, including by promoting the implementation of Security Council resolutions to counter terrorism and proliferation. Strengthening our common security involves not only countering new unconventional transnational threats such as terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, but also organized crime and illicit trafficking.

The United States welcomes and encourages OSCE efforts to strengthen its regional, subregional and international cooperation. In that regard, we look forward to further cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations.

Mr. Parham (United Kingdom): May I also welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, Mr. Ažubalis, to the Council today. I thank him very much for his briefing.

The United Kingdom welcomes Mr. Ažubalis's assumption of his role as Chairperson-in-Office for 2011. We fully support the work programme that he has set out for us this morning. In particular, we welcome his human rights and good governance priorities, alongside hard security issues. Implementing his programme of work will not be an easy task. The members of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) must work collectively and with vigour to meet the many challenges we will face over the coming years. The Commemorative Declaration issued at the OSCE Summit in Astana last December (see A/65/688) pointedly reaffirmed the OSCE's principles and commitments. Delivery will require close cooperation with international organizations, including of course the United Nations.

Progress on protracted conflicts has been elusive. It is therefore right that Mr. Ažubalis has prioritized this. We were disappointed at the failure at the Astana Summit to agree language on protracted conflicts, notably on Georgia. That prevented the OSCE from

agreeing an even more ambitious and comprehensive framework for action. The United Kingdom welcomes the role that Mr. Ažubalis has already played in attempting to advance dialogue on the Transdniestrian conflict, as well as his commitment to pursuing a settlement in Nagorny Karabakh.

In Georgia, the OSCE has worked with the United Nations and the European Union as a co-chair of the Geneva talks. We remain convinced of the need for an OSCE presence in Georgia, including in the region of South Ossetia. We welcome the continued efforts to explore all options to that end.

The response to the Kyrgyzstan crisis last April was a demonstration of the effective cooperation between the OSCE, the European Union and the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia. Those three bodies worked towards resolving the situation and restoring peace and stability.

Developing and strengthening key institutions and civil society is key to sustainable conflict resolution. The OSCE's field operations conduct crucial activities in those areas. We therefore regret that the office in Minsk will close. Its mandate remains relevant and important. Much more needs to be done to ensure the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Belarus. We reiterate our call to the Belarusian Government to reconsider its position.

Human rights and fundamental freedoms are an essential element in promoting and maintaining peace and security. That includes freedom of the media. Too many journalists in several OSCE States work We also commend the close cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

The prestigious role of the OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office brings with it important responsibilities to promote and embody the principles of human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy, good governance and the rule of law, on which the OSCE is founded. The work programme set out for us underlines that Mr. Ažubalis has a clear and pragmatic vision for making progress on all of those areas. We offer our full support to his efforts to achieve those objectives.

Mr. Wittig (Germany): I would like to join my colleagues in warmly welcoming the Foreign Minister of Lithuania to the Council today. May I also thank him for his comprehensive briefing setting out the priorities of Lithuania as Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) for 2011.

Germany shares the Chairman's priorities and looks forward to working with Lithuania on the key issues facing the OSCE. Let me briefly comment on three aspects.

First, we consider progress in the resolution of protracted conflicts in Eastern Europe and Asia to be of particular relevance. The OSCE plays an important role as a facilitator in this regard. However, no success can be achieved without the political will of the relevant players on the ground. Unresolved issues in Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan have to be addressed by partners in a consensual and peaceful manner and on the basis of respect for human rights, including minority rights.

Germany commends the OSCE's active participation in the political process aimed at settling the Transdniestrian conflict. The Chairman-in-Office has already conducted helpful consultations with the parties involved. The recent formation of a coalition Government in Moldova provides an opportunity to move forward. We encourage parties to take up discussions in the formal five plus two talks as soon as possible.

Germany welcomes the role of the OSCE in pursuing a settlement of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict within the framework of the Minsk Group, and agrees with the Chairman-in-Office that a strengthening of the OSCE monitoring activities could prove beneficial.

On Georgia, we remain committed to the principle of an OSCE presence as part of the international monitoring of the situation. We continue to support the active engagement of the OSCE in the ongoing Geneva international discussions to reduce tensions and build trust among affected communities. We also stress the importance of the functioning of the two incident-prevention mechanisms. In this context, we urge the conclusion of a swift agreement concerning the continued funding of the work of the United Nations representative to the Geneva talks.

Secondly, Germany wishes to express concern regarding the closure of the OSCE office in Minsk by

the Government of Belarus. We share the views presented by the Lithuanian Chairman-in-Office on this issue. The OSCE office in Minsk makes an important contribution to strengthening institutions and the rule of law in Belarus, and its work has not yet been completed. Germany appreciates the efforts made by the Lithuanian chairmanship to reopen the office and ensure that it can continue with its mission.

Thirdly, let me underline that Germany attaches great importance to close cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations. Cooperation in the fight against terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and organized crime are important examples of areas in which the international community can benefit from close cooperation and relations between the two Organizations.

As a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, the OSCE is, among other things, a key instrument for post-conflict rehabilitation in its region. We welcome the ideas of the Lithuanian chairmanship to examine the OSCE role in stabilization, reconstruction and peacebuilding in more detail. The Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict (S/2009/304) may be considered a pertinent underpinning for these deliberations and shows how the two organizations complement each other in their efforts.

To conclude, let me thank the Chairman-in-Office once again for his briefing and reiterate Germany's full support for the Lithuanian OSCE chairmanship.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, Mr. Ažubalis, and thank him for his detailed briefing.

The Russian Federation is in favour of improving and comprehensively developing cooperation between the United Nations, the Security Council and regional and subregional arrangements, among which the OSCE holds an important place. Such cooperation should be based on the strong foundation of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular Chapter VIII, and take into due account the comparative advantages of the universal Organization and these mechanisms. There must be no doubt about the fact that it is the Security Council that holds the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

As set forth in the declaration of the OSCE Summit held in Astana, the basic mission of the Organization is to ensure equal and indivisible security for all member States. To that end, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev is pursuing an initiative aimed at the conclusion of a legally binding treaty on European security.

We agree with the OSCE Chairman-in-Office's assessment of the Geneva discussions on security and stability in the Transcaucasus, which are co-chaired by the European Union, the OSCE and the United Nations. That forum is an important platform for dialogue for Abkhazia, Georgia and South Ossetia. We agree on the importance of the full participation of a representative of the United Nations in this work. That was the objective of the decisions of the Secretary-General, in accordance with United Nations practice, to finance the Tsunen group from the United Nations regular budget.

We welcome the activities of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo which, as the Minister mentioned, continues to carry out its mandate in the framework of resolution 1244 (1999) and in close cooperation with the United Nations Mission. We share his concern over incidents of illegal trading in human organs, and we fully support calls for an independent investigation. We believe that the OSCE Mission in Kosovo should provide assistance to such an international investigation.

With regard to resolving the situation in Afghanistan, we see the OSCE's role in curbing the illegal trade in Afghan narcotics as vital. Drug trafficking has been identified as a threat to international peace and stability in decisions of the Security Council and General Assembly. An important element here is the implementation of the OSCE framework for combating the illegal narcotics trade and trade in chemical precursors. The draft of that framework was put forward by Russia, together with Armenia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, the United States of America, Tajikistan and Turkey.

We welcome the intention of the Chairman-in-Office to establish cooperation with the African Union, the League of Arab States, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum, and the Organization of American States. However, primary attention should be given to

developing cooperation with influential regional organizations in areas under the direct responsibility of the OSCE, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Eurasian Economic Community, which have useful experience and strong potential to help ensure peace and security.

In our view, the establishment of normative foundations for all its work is key to enhancing the OSCE's future effectiveness and to transforming it into an intergovernmental organization. Our proposals based on the OSCE Charter remain on the negotiation table. We hope that the vision for the work of the Lithuanian chairmanship set out today by Mr. Ažubalis will help to overcome the crisis mentality of recent years in the OSCE and adapt it to current realities.

Mrs. Ogwu (Nigeria): I, too, would like to welcome Foreign Minister Ažubalis to the Council and to congratulate him on assuming the chairmanship-in-office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). We thank him in particular for his lucid and insightful briefing on the Organization's plans and priorities for 2011, and we wish him a very successful tenure.

The OSCE remains a key component of European security. Its importance for building strong and genuinely cooperative relationships among its 56 member States was quite evident from the briefing we have just heard this morning. We are pleased that the OSCE is not only making noteworthy progress as a regional organization, but also enhancing cooperation with the United Nations in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. In this regard, we commend the collaboration between the OSCE and the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy in Central Asia that facilitated the peaceful settlement of the 2010 inter-ethnic conflict in the Kyrgyz Republic. We also commend the close cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

Nigeria welcomes the high priority that the Chairman-in-Office has placed on resolving protracted conflicts in the region, including the renewed Transdniestria settlement talks in the Republic of Moldova and the efforts to resolve the Nagorny Karabakh conflicts.

We also welcome the OSCE's efforts to promote cooperation in border security management in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and the deployment of a good offices mission to defuse political tension in Albania. We believe that concrete results could be achieved within the Geneva international discussions framework, and that the United Nations experience in supporting regional conflict management will be invaluable in this process. We therefore support the Minister's requests for full-fledged United Nations representation at the Geneva discussions.

The emphasis Mr. Ažubalis placed on human rights, women's and civil society issues, freedom of the press and the promotion of democracy on the agenda of the OSCE deserves our encouragement, and indeed our broad support. Our expectation is that the Vilnius conference on journalistic freedom to be held in June will serve as an important platform to genuinely address the threats to journalistic freedom and consolidate the progress under way.

It is also our expectation that the relationship between Belarus and the OSCE will be restored on the basis of shared goals and anticipated mutual benefits. We believe that the OSCE efforts to promote tolerance through education and student-exchange agreements will guarantee long-term inter-ethnic harmony in the whole region.

Going forward, pressing challenges such as the ongoing tensions in South Ossetia, the pursuit of freedom of the press and the safety of journalists and the settlement of territorial disputes in the southern Caucasus region present the Lithuanian presidency with a unique opportunity to promote change in the region. To achieve this credibly, the organization must also address the stagnation in arms control, vigorously engage in Afghanistan and confront the challenges of energy security.

We share the Minister's commitment to effectively cope with transnational threats to international peace and security, such as human trafficking, drug trafficking and cyber security. Since transnational crimes are not limited to territorial boundaries, combating them requires complete cooperation. For this reason, we urge the OSCE to continue to create opportunities for cooperation and information exchanges with regional security agencies, including the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa.

We believe that the need for coordination between the United Nations and regional organizations in the fight against global security threats was a point that was vividly made by Mr. Ažubalis at last month's special meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna, and indeed in today's briefing.

Nigeria believes that the vision that the Minister has outlined ensures a very promising future for the organization. It is a vision that will promote regional stability and international peace and security. Such an agenda advances the work of the Security Council, and is thus deserving of our support and endorsement. But the OSCE must strengthen its role in the region. It must retain its fundamental character as the most inclusive Atlantic forum for consultation and joint action.

Mr. Salam (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Ažubalis and to thank him for his briefing, which was focused on strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations.

The authors of the United Nations Charter dedicated an entire chapter — namely, Chapter VIII — to the role of regional organizations and the maintenance of international peace and security. This is proof that the role of the United Nations complements the role of regional organizations — hence the importance of cooperation between these organizations aimed at taking advantage of their relative strengths.

Lebanon welcomes the efforts undertaken by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in the various conflicts in Europe and Asia with a view to establishing peace. The role of the OSCE is directly linked to conflicts that are within its area of competence and within its geographic area, and that have common cultural and historical elements.

All of this means that the OSCE has a particular understanding of the various events taking place in the region and can consider ways to resolve these conflicts through peaceful means. The OSCE today includes 56 member States, which can contribute to peace and security in three stages: before a conflict, through early warning and preventive diplomacy; during a conflict, with a view to reducing tensions and containing the conflict in order to settle it in a peaceful way; and after a conflict, to contribute to peacebuilding.

Lebanon calls on OSCE to attach particular importance to the rule of law, respect for human rights and the dialogue among cultures and religions, without neglecting efforts to combat terrorism, drug trafficking, human trafficking and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and small arms and light weapons, as such efforts have a positive impact on international peace and security.

Moreover, given their common objectives, Lebanon believes that it is necessary to strengthen cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia. It is also necessary to work with other regional organizations with a view to sharing information, experience and capacities. In this respect, we would highlight in particular the League of Arab States and the African Union, as these organizations can make very important contributions in the area of peace and security in the Arab world and Africa. Lebanon supports all efforts to strengthen international peace and security, given that this is the main objective of our Organization.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania and Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Mr. Audronius Ažubalis, for his statement. We believe his intervention included some very interesting perspectives on the OSCE's future and its cooperation with the United Nations.

Colombia would like to highlight the common identity and shared principles of our two organizations. We also share a vision of the essential nature of freedom, democracy and respect for human rights in efforts to maintain security.

Likewise, we believe that security, which is at the top of the list of the priorities of the Government of Colombia, is a prerequisite for the consolidation of the rule of law, peace and conflict prevention. We view security as a requirement for the effective enjoyment of citizen's liberties, sustainable development and the achievement of social prosperity under democratic precepts. In this context, we value the work of the OSCE as an example of the constructive potential of interregional, regional and subregional cooperation in promoting stability for nations and peoples.

In the context of respect for the principles and norms of international law, sovereignty and the self-determination of peoples, dialogue and

cooperation at all regional levels can contribute to progress towards a safer and more harmonious world.

We also believe that the interaction between organizations of this type and the United Nations — and the Security Council in particular, in areas within its purview — promotes a better understanding of specific situations. Such exchanges promote comprehensive approaches to security issues by integrating human, political, economic, environmental and military elements specific to the regional dynamics.

With respect to cooperation with the United Nations, we welcome the contribution of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo to implementing the mandate of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. We will have the opportunity to address that issue on the agenda tomorrow, but I believe it relevant to express appreciation for regional efforts to move ahead on areas of common interest, in accordance with the provisions of resolution 1244 (1999).

Furthermore, we applaud the firm commitment noted by the Minister of Lithuania to the role of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in fighting terrorism. To the extent that regional areas resolutely support overall frameworks and strategies to address that transnational scourge in all its manifestations, we will be able to make more effective use of the relevant international instruments. Similarly, we note with interest the planned increase in OSCE support for actions led by the United Nations to stabilize Afghanistan with a view to countering, in coordination with national authorities, transnational threats that could emerge from that country's territory. Colombia takes this opportunity to express its solidarity with the Afghan people and to offer all relevant experience in fighting such threats.

In conclusion, I would like to underscore the importance of promoting smoother communication between OSCE and other regional organizations, including the Organization of American States, as the Minister mentioned. Prosperity, democracy and peace are the clear beneficiaries of dialogue and interregional agreement on the fundamental value of security.

Mr. Moraes Cabral (Portugal): I warmly welcome His Excellency Mr. Audronius Ažubalis, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, and congratulate him on his assumption of the chairmanship-in-office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Let me assure the Minister that Portugal fully supports his efforts to promote the OSCE agenda, as well as Lithuania's endeavours to ensure that all three dimensions of the Organization's activities are taken forward in a balanced manner. I also thank the Minister for today's very comprehensive briefing outlining Lithuania's priorities for the OSCE in 2011.

Portugal feels encouraged by the follow-up process to the Astana Declaration, which will build on the productive discussions that came out of the Corfu process for a European security dialogue in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regions. The Astana Final Declaration unequivocally confirms all dimensions of the OSCE acquis, and includes clear tasks aimed at further strengthening and defending the OSCE's legacy of a comprehensive, cooperative and indivisible concept of security, including by starting to work on an action plan.

Portugal warmly welcomes the OSCE chairmanship's intention to focus on concrete action, addressing regional issues, early warning, conflict prevention, arms control, and confidence- and security-building measures, as well as the economic and human dimensions. In that regard, I would like to emphasize the importance that Portugal attaches to the promotion of close cooperation between the OSCE and other international organizations.

We attach special importance to the added value that the United Nations and the OSCE can bring to each other's work in several regions. For example, the close cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia is vital to diffusing tensions in that complex region and deserves all our support.

Allow me to refer briefly to some of the main issues on the chairmanship's programme. All are relevant to further cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations.

First, concerning the human dimension — a crucial component of the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security — we welcome the clear reiteration of fundamental commitments concerning the protection of human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law, and the emphasis on their better implementation. That is a goal to which we attach great importance and that we are glad to see at the top of this year's OSCE priorities.

Secondly, we welcome the Lithuanian chairmanship's support for further work to solve the impasse in the field of conventional arms control in Europe and its commitment to moving forward with the improvement of the OSCE's important confidence- and security-building regime.

Thirdly, we are well aware of the threat to security that protracted, unresolved conflicts in the OSCE space continue to present. In fact, such conflicts continue to challenge the OSCE's objective of a stable, peaceful and prosperous Eurasian space. That is an area where United Nations-OSCE cooperation is both useful and indispensable, as the joint participation in the Geneva talks made clear.

Fourthly, the fight against transnational threats, such as terrorism and the trafficking in persons and drugs, as well as the welcome boost to the OSCE's profile in cybersecurity, are all areas where there has been a fair amount of consensus. And as threats evolve, so should the tools at our disposal to address them. Also in that context, interaction between the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the OSCE has enormous potential. The jointly organized July 2010 conference on international cooperation on crime in Central Asia and Afghanistan is a case in point.

Fifth is the matter of non-proliferation in connection with the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), with regard to which we can also explore forms of cooperation between the United Nations and OSCE.

May I also underline the concrete and focused contribution of the European Union to the OSCE's work in all of those areas, both conceptually and at the operational level, and always on the basis of solid support for the notion of comprehensive security. In that sense, we are especially pleased to see that in the coming two years, the organization will have two members of the European Union, Lithuania and Ireland, as its Chairs.

Finally, I would like to reaffirm Portugal's confidence in Lithuania's leadership. We will continue to support Lithuania, as Chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, in dealing with old and new challenges, as well as in strengthening cooperative relations between the OSCE and the United Nations.

Mr. Manjeev Singh Puri (India): I, too, would like to join my colleagues in thanking His Excellency Foreign Minister Audronius Ažubalis for his comprehensive briefing on the activities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and its priorities in the months to come.

India supports the role of regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security and their cooperation with the United Nations under Chapter VIII of the Charter. Article 54 of the Charter enjoins such organizations to keep the Security Council fully informed of their activities in the maintenance of international peace and security. We therefore welcome the briefing by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office.

Minister Ažubalis touched upon a wide canvas of issues, several concerning our immediate and extended neighbourhood. Naturally, they are of great interest to our delegation. We appreciate the work that the OSCE has been doing to promote security in its political, military, economic, environmental and human dimensions. It has addressed a wide range of security-related concerns, including arms control, confidence- and security-building measures, human rights, national minorities, democratization, policing strategies, counter-terrorism, and economic and environmental issues. They have significantly helped in managing and resolving some of the most significant problems in the post-Cold War world.

The countries of Central Asia and Eastern Europe have particularly benefited from the OSCE's cooperation. In the past decade or so, the OSCE has significantly expanded its activities in our neighbourhood under the Asian Partners for Cooperation and the Asian Contact Group. Annual conferences in areas such as human security, regional cooperation and comprehensive security in Central Asia, anti-trafficking and the implementation of OSCE confidence- and security-building measures in North-East Asia are important activities. The OSCE's cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum, of which India is a member, on matters related to confidence-building measures and preventive diplomacy is appreciable. We also welcome the OSCE's partnership with Afghanistan in border security management and its deployment of an election support team during the elections in that country.

We wish the OSCE great success in its efforts and activities to promote understanding and foster peace and security among its member and partner countries. We also extend our good wishes to the Lithuanian

chairmanship of the OSCE, and personally to Foreign Minister Ažubalis. We hope that, under his stewardship, the OSCE will continue its important work.

Mr. Mashabane (South Africa): My delegation joins others in welcoming the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Mr. Audronius Ažubalis, to the Security Council. We wish to thank him for his briefing on the work of the OSCE.

Last week, we received a briefing (see S/PV.6477) from the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union (EU) on the EU's cooperation with the United Nations, at which time we reiterated our strong view that cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in the area of peace and security was a major priority for us. We welcome all efforts in that regard.

Our support for such initiatives stems from our belief that multilateralism is strengthened through enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations. Article 54 of Chapter VIII of the Charter, under which the OSCE is briefing the Council here today, envisaged strong cooperation between the Security Council and regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security.

We realize, however, that each regional organization is unique in terms of the challenges they face in maintaining international peace and security and the manner in which they address those threats. Moreover, we do not believe that efforts by regional organizations absolve the Council of its Charter-mandated responsibilities as the guardian of international peace and security. In fact, such efforts complement each other. The briefing we just received from the Chairman-in-Office confirms as much.

We have noted with appreciation the challenges that the OSCE helps to address, from Kosovo to Moldova, to Nagorny Karabakh and in Central Asia. We welcome the sharing of experiences between the OSCE and other regional organizations, in particular the African Union, and hope that such cooperation can be strengthened.

In conclusion, we would like to assure the OSCE of our support for all of those efforts.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish to thank Mr. Audronius Ažubalis, Foreign Minister of Lithuania, for his briefing on behalf of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

China attaches great importance to cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security. In fulfilling its primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, the Security Council needs the important support and cooperation of regional and subregional organizations. In particular, the Council and those organizations should make use of their advantages and complement each other in a common effort to promote international peace and security.

The OSCE is an important regional organization in Europe in terms of maintaining international peace and security. It is also an important cooperative partner of the United Nations. We commend the contributions of the OSCE to preventive diplomacy, dispute mediation, post-conflict peacebuilding and counter-terrorism.

We encourage the OSCE to continue to make use of its advantages and to play a positive role in maintaining regional peace, security and stability. We also support the initiatives of the United Nations and the Security Council to cooperate more pragmatically and effectively with the OSCE, on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations, in the maintenance of regional peace and security.

Ms. Čolaković (Bosnia and Herzegovina): I would like to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, Mr. Audronius Ažubalis, and thank him for his detailed and very comprehensive briefing. I would also like to extend our congratulations to him and his country on holding the chairmanship this year.

These regular briefings by the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to the Council underscore the importance of an effective partnership between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in countering new and evolving threats to international security.

Building comprehensive and lasting security is a common strategic interest, and also one of the goals of the OSCE. With its 56 participating States, the OSCE

is a broad-based and credible forum where each State maintains active relations based on its own interests. Such a forum has a number of political and diplomatic advantages, enabling States to resolve internal issues and those of shared concern.

Furthermore, member States can engage in dialogue on European security and cooperation on an equal footing. As for Bosnia and Herzegovina, we will continue to promote the same priorities in the work of the OSCE, focusing mainly on counter-terrorism, arms control, the protection of human rights and minorities, freedom of the media, human trafficking, corruption and all other forms of criminal activity.

In addition, we recognize and support the OSCE as a forum and an organization with a mandate for the early prevention of all conflicts. We are fully committed to actively contributing to the early prevention and neutralization of situations that could lead to conflict in the OSCE region.

Lastly, allow me to briefly reflect on the OSCE Summit held in Astana last December. The Summit only confirmed our awareness of the urgent problems that States are facing, including such transnational threats as terrorism and trafficking. We recognize that the OSCE is one of the adequate forums for analyzing those issues and finding solutions. The Summit also opened new paths for long-term cooperation among member States and set high expectations for important new decisions to facilitate such cooperation.

In addition, the adoption of the Astana Commemorative Declaration (see A/65/668) reconfirmed the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security, which is based on trust and transparency. Bosnia and Herzegovina strongly supports that approach and the joint initiatives of member States aimed at building a higher level of trust and strengthening security in Europe.

In conclusion, I would like to once again underline the importance and encourage further enhancement of cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter.

Mr. Bonne (France) (*spoke in French*): I would also like to welcome to the Council Mr. Andronius Ažubalis, Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania. We agree with the priority actions that he announced and we congratulate him on his attention to further strengthening the ties of cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE.

The 56 participating States of the OSCE have the same goals in the areas of regional security, human and economic development and respect for human rights. The Astana Summit, held early in December 2010, reaffirmed those common objectives and created new avenues for cooperation.

The OSCE and the United Nations can be complementary in many areas, as Mr. Ažubalis has said. Transborder threats, the fight against organized crime, energy security, counter-terrorism, freedom of expression and freedom of the media are all challenges that are also engaging the United Nations. In addition, the Secretary General of the OSCE will present the OSCE's activities in the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee next week, as a concrete example of exchange and cooperation on an issue of common interest.

Our two organizations also have much to exchange in order that their efforts in some regions are integrated. The Lithuanian Foreign Minister just mentioned Afghanistan, which is a neighbouring country to several OSCE participating States, where the organization is putting in place border-monitoring operations. In the Balkans, the OSCE continues to support the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. Central Asia is also an important area of operations for the OSCE, which has five missions there. Its grasp of the local terrain has made it able to effectively respond to the crisis that shook Kyrgyzstan in June 2010, working with the United Nations and the European Union. The Lithuanian chairmanship would like to devote efforts to the fight against transborder threats in Central Asia. We support that regional initiative, which could be coordinated with efforts by specialized international institutions. We especially support strengthening cooperation with the United Nations conflict prevention centre.

However, the OSCE and the United Nations have seen some of their common efforts thwarted. For example, the missions of both the OSCE and the United Nations were forced to abandon Georgia after the war in the summer of 2008, even though their presence was bolstering stability. The situation in Georgia remains a source of concern, especially in

Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as well as in the whole Caucasus region. We therefore call upon all actors in the region to refrain from any action that might destabilize the current fragile equilibrium. We will pursue our efforts in the Geneva discussions to work towards a peaceful settlement of the Georgian dispute.

The situation in Belarus has also been a source of particular concern for us since the presidential elections in December. We have witnessed attacks on freedom of the press and on basic principles of democracy, with a number of opposition figures having been arrested. The decision of the Belarusian authorities to close the OSCE office in Minsk is contrary to the values of the organization, to which Belarus itself has agreed. Together we must therefore call upon that State to respect human rights, and more specifically civil and political rights.

The OSCE covers a vast area with shared values that should be preserved and strengthened. It represents a unique model of cooperation, based on the conviction that the security of Europe goes hand in hand with the promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. In that connection, we welcome the Lithuanian chairmanship's commitment to promoting journalistic pluralism, to stopping hate crimes and to promoting human rights. Participating nations have undertaken significant commitments, such as protecting the territorial integrity of States, the peaceful settlement of disputes and rejection of recourse to the threat or use of force. We should all stand firm in those principles; indeed they are fundamental principles of our own Organization.

As an OSCE participant, we would like to see it develop ties with other regional organizations and international organizations, as well as with the European Union (EU). Cooperation with the EU is already very good and could be further strengthened. Like the OSCE, the European Union is indeed present in the Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia, where it plays an important role. Hundreds of European judges, police and other law enforcement officials have been deployed to the region to strengthen local capacity. The more interaction among different regional organizations — each with different experience and specific expertise — the more we can work together to be of use to countries that will benefit from our presence. We wish Lithuania a very successful chairmanship of the OSCE and we hope that we can continue to strengthen and deepen cooperation between our two organizations.

Mr. Moungara Moussotsi (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I would like to join previous speakers in warmly welcoming to the Chamber Mr. Audronius Ažubalis, Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania. I would like to thank him for his detailed briefing, which outlines the priorities of the OSCE under his country's chairmanship. I would like to address two issues among the priorities of the Lithuanian chairmanship, namely, the resolution of protracted conflicts and strengthening the OSCE's response to transnational threats.

On the subject of the settlement of protracted conflicts, my delegation shares the view of the Chair of the OSCE, which is to move towards resolving those conflicts, on the one hand so as to prevent their protraction from contributing to instability and on the other hand to reduce the costs associated with their continuation. Along those lines, we welcome the efforts of the OSCE to re-launch the 5+2 format negotiations in order to resolve the conflict in Transdniestria in Moldova while respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova.

Strengthening regional organizations with a view to making them more operational and more able to confront various crises should remain among our top priorities. That is why we are pleased that the OSCE has taken that concern into account through its bodies, mechanisms and specialized institutions. Moreover, we believe that an early warning system to detect the early signs of potential conflict is part of a better way to prevent conflicts with untold human, material and financial consequences. We also agree with the Lithuanian chairmanship that an early warning system should be based on clear capacity and will to act promptly.

Accordingly, the mechanisms set up by some regional organizations, such as the Economic Community of Central African States, to prevent conflicts — particularly the Central African Early Warning System and the Peace and Security Council of Central Africa — would all benefit from the wealth of experience of the OSCE. Likewise, the African Standby Force, with its different components based in

the five subregions of the continent, could in its operations rely on the expertise of the OSCE. We are encouraged by the commitment of the Lithuanian chairmanship to continue strengthening the cooperation of the OSCE and regional organizations of other regions of the world, such as the African Union.

The contribution of the OSCE to the efforts of the United Nations in promoting international peace and cooperation in its theatre of operations speaks for itself. The same is true for its commitment in Kosovo, Georgia and Afghanistan, to cite only those few examples. We welcome the focus of the Lithuanian chairmanship on continuing and strengthening its cooperation with the United Nations in combating other challenges to international peace and security, such as terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, organized crime and drug trafficking. In conclusion, we reiterate our support for the activities of the OSCE and the road map set forth by the Lithuanian chairmanship.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Brazil.

I wish to welcome Minister Audronius Ažubalis and to thank him for his presentation. I congratulate him on assuming the chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and wish him a very successful tenure.

Brazil is convinced that regional and subregional organizations can greatly contribute to further strengthening the multilateral system, including in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security. I am certain that, under the Lithuanian leadership, the OSCE will advance its dialogue and cooperation with the United Nations. Collaboration between the United Nations and the OSCE is a concrete example of a partnership that has helped to promote peace and security in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and to fight terrorism.

In Afghanistan, the OSCE has been actively involved in efforts to foster political dialogue, increase national capacities, and support the democratic process. Brazil notes with satisfaction the close coordination of OSCE with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan in this regard. We appreciate the assistance provided to the Afghan Government in the fields of border security, police training and the fight against drug trafficking.

In Kyrgyzstan, the OSCE played a constructive role last year, in close coordination with the United Nations and the European Union, in the context of a challenging political environment. Brazil recognizes the work that was done, inter alia, to normalize the situation in the country, ensure security and stability, help the victims of violence, and assist the process of national reconciliation. With the active engagement of the international community, we hope that the people of Kyrgyzstan will be able to overcome current difficulties, strengthen democratic institutions, and create more opportunities for social and economic development.

I note the priorities outlined by Lithuania for its OSCE chairmanship in 2011. We were pleased to learn that, along with efforts to address protracted conflicts, attention will be given to a renewed commitment to democracy, the rule of law and human rights, as well as to new ways to promote energy security, media freedom and tolerance education. Tolerance and diversity are two defining features of Brazilian society. Having hosted last year's Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil very much welcomes OSCE initiatives in this regard.

Brazil joins in supporting the vision and priorities established by Lithuania for the work of the OSCE in the current year, and looks forward to a very fruitful cooperation between that organization and the United Nations.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to Minister Ažubalis to respond to the comments made and questions raised.

Mr. Ažubalis: I sincerely thank all Council members for their unanimous support for our chairmanship programme. It is obvious that the consolidated political will of all nations concerned can move things along. I hope that the supportive statements made here today will be reflected in strong political will that will lead to concrete actions and help us to implement our programme.

The President: There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.